

Berrow Annual Parish Meeting - DRAFT

Minutes of the Berrow Annual Parish Meeting
held on 18th May 2021 at 7.00 pm at Berrow & Pendock Village Hall.

Present: 2 Members of the Parish, the Chair and the Clerk of Berrow Parish Council

- 1. Apologies:** Apologies were received from John Dudfield.
- 2. Minutes:** The minutes of the Berrow Parish Annual Meeting of 21st May 2019 were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chair of the meeting.
- 3. Chairman's Report:** Due to the Covid-19 pandemic I am reporting on 2 years because it was legislated in May 2020 that there was no requirement to hold an Annual General Meeting that year as long as the Chair agreed to continue as Chair until the next AGM is held, the other councillors agreed for this to happen and everyone agreed to hold the next AGM in May 2021. Everyone confirmed all this was acceptable.
The previous year (2019) began as usual in mid May with the 2 parish Annual Meetings where I was re-elected as Chairman for the year. Sadly, Anne Lewis decided not to stand for re-election either as Vice Chair or councillor. It was agreed she would be much missed, and everyone thanked for her hard work. A thank you social drink event was held at the local pub for Anne later in the year which everyone enjoyed. No-one came forward for the role of Vice-Chair so none was elected and as per guidelines it was agreed that if the Chair was absent for any reason meetings could still take place led by a suitable councillor as long as there was a Quorum.

May 2019 was the time for the full Elections of councillors which happens every 4 years and the remaining councillors stood again for election and were successful. After this all other vacancies were available for co-option and there have been adverts placed on noticeboards and in the parish magazine.

Mike Robson chose to resign from the Council in April last year, so he was thanked for his efforts and input during his time with us and wished well.

Due to the meetings necessarily being held on Zoom during the Pandemic Cllr. Mike Thomas was not comfortable in attending meetings this year via this method which meant that due to local government rules not allowing councillors to remain in post if they do not attend meetings for 6 months he chose to stand down for the time being. He was thanked for his many years of

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service and it is hoped he would be happy to re-join us once meetings can take place safely live again.

We are however, pleased to welcome Caroline Samsonoff from Berrow as a new member who joined us in March this year. We are still looking for others to join us, as the group can total 7 and we are currently only 4.

Councillors and the clerk are offered training opportunities via CALC and the local councils. In January both myself and Paul Lewis attended a useful virtual session on the planning service of the Malvern Hills District Council and the roles and functions of the development management and enforcement processes.

The Chair and the Parish Clerk met in August 2019 for the Clerk's annual review which was a two-way process and went well. In October 2020 it was agreed to review the Parish Clerk's salary in line with the current NALC's pay scales. After consideration of this and full agreement from other members the Clerk was offered a pay rise with effect from 1st April 2021. It was agreed her contracted monthly hours would remain the same.

The Annual Return Governance statements for both years were reviewed by the group who were happy with the compliance of them and the documents were signed off by the Chair.

The accounts to the March year end for the years 2018/19 and 2020/21 were duly presented, approved and signed off.

In December of both years the Clerk presented the budgets for the following year which after minor adjustments were approved by the Council and showed a healthy forecast. The precept for 2021/22 remains the same as the previous year.

At all the meetings the Clerk presents a Finance report which is reviewed and signed off by the council and shows the accounts to be in a healthy state.

The contract for the Lengthsman's Scheme with Worcestershire County Council was signed off by the council again. We will be looking at any observations he has made about necessary works around the parish at a future meeting.

Defibrillators in the parish – During last year the clerk produced a paper showing the process for ordering spare parts for the 2 defibrillators in the parish that the council are responsible for at Rye Cross and Hollybush. This has been issued to the Guardians who check and report on the machines.

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M50 and Queens Arms bridge closures – The Queens Arms bridge finally re-opened in December 2019 via a single running lane with traffic lights in place. The works to both these Highways schemes finally came to a close with all bridges being opened up in late July/early August 2020 much to the relief of the locals who had been battling with all the various diversions put in place.

Severn Trent Water works – just as we all thought we were near the end of any highways disruption Severn Trent announced plans to do major re-piping work in our area. Although very disruptive, partly due to the winter weather makings roads difficult to traverse, the work continued apace and finished a little earlier than on target in April 2020.

The council learnt that Worcestershire County Council had agreed to provide a grit bin and salt for the top of Whittings Hill Lane. This was ordered and finally arrived in December last year. It has been installed on the verge just outside 2 Whiting Ash Cottage.

The pandemic and first lockdown kicked in in force in March 2020 and therefore the decision was taken to cancel the live mid March meeting which had been scheduled to take place just before the rules came in. The clerk then looked into how the council would proceed in the future and the legal and technology procedures for holding meetings virtually on either Webex or Zoom. The council have an obligation to hold a minimum of three meetings per year, excluding the AGM. The Zoom system was found to be a better system and was then adopted by the council for future meetings.

The council receive regular reports from the District Councillor, Bronwen Behan, either in person when she attends the meetings or via a report sent to the clerk prior to the meeting. Her input on activities within the district is welcomed and useful.

Tom Wells, our County Councillor was able to attend far more of our meetings this year due to them being held via Zoom which meant without the necessary travelling across the county he was more available to come. His input was appreciated and we have also started to receive his monthly parish council reports.

Both councillors were able to keep us updated on the local council's response and recovery stages of the Covid-19 pandemic and the situation regarding the vaccination programme in the area.

Speed awareness in the parish – after various concerns were raised over the issue of speeding in the parish, and after one bad accident in the Hollybush area it was agreed that the clerk should liaise with County Councillor Wells to see if he was able to assist in the obtaining of

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speed warning signs. In October last year the council learnt that Councillor Wells has a funding pot he can use to benefit parish councils. He then proposed to use some of this to fund a mobile Vehicle Activated Sign which could be shared with Berrow and Pendock Parish Councils on a rotational basis and located in various areas of concern for speeding within the parish. After further consideration, Councillor Wells agreed that Berrow can share the VAS with Birtsmorton parish council and discussions are ongoing with them to agree the rotation schedule.

Land at Farleys ground – this somewhat contentious matter has been discussed and reviewed at all the meetings this year and an update received. The council continue to monitor this.

Neighbourhood Watch scheme – a new scheme has been set up recently in Berrow and Pendock, led by Pendock Parish councillor Sue Giles, and including two local co-ordinators. Relevant emails are now going out to members who have signed up, and the signs are also installed around the parishes. There have been a worrying number of a variety of unpleasant burglaries in the local area in the last year and it is hoped the scheme will help to combat these.

Parish Website – the clerk looked into the various options of developing a website for the council and presented a paper to the group. It was agreed in December 2019 to proceed with this idea and to create a website. This is now established but still in need of further development.

In conjunction with Pendock Parish Council a Christmas Wreath competition was held in December 2019 with entry fees going to the Midlands Air Ambulance charity. Various people entered into the spirit of it and created some lovely wreaths. The prize for each parish was given out to the two winners by both the council Chairs at Pendock shop.

Finally I would like to thank the Clerk and all the councillors for their hard work, contributions and support throughout what has proved to be a year or so unlike any we have ever known.

- 4. Statement of Accounts:** The Finance Officer presented the Statement of Accounts for the year to 31st March 2021 which showed a surplus in cash flow of £414.20. Expenditure for 2020-21 was down on the previous year as there were no costs associated with the maintenance of the defibrillators and there was no hire of the village hall for Parish Council meetings. A copy of the Accounts is given in Appendix A

- 5. Berrow & Pendock Village Hall Report:** Due to COVID-19 restrictions, there has been barely any usage of the Village Hall since February 2020. Government grants totalling £20.5k have been received during the lockdowns and the Village Hall committee is looking into how best to

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spend the money with the current preference being to improve the kitchen facilities with the hope that this in turn will increase the appeal and usage of the hall. Base running costs is approximately £1.8k per annum, so ways of increasing efficiency are also being considered. The balance at the bank on 31st March 2021 is £22,307.19

6. Berrow Charities Report: The 2019 AGM was held in December 2019 when the funds were £1,628.57. The AGM for 2020 was deferred until March 2021 to allow for the annual rent to be received from Fisher German, as well as to coincide with the annual accounting period of 1st April to 31st March. The Charities funds on 31st March 2021 amounted to £2,272.12. The Trustees agreed to donate £200 for the Malvern Hills Food Bank with a request to direct the funds to the Upton Food Bank if possible. A letter has also been sent to Pendock CofE Primary School to offer donations if required to fund laptops/tablets for any pupils who live in the parish of Berrow and may be in need of them.

7. Any further business: None.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.52 pm.

Signed:

Date:

Chair

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APPENDIX A

Berrow Parish Council Receipts and Payments Account For the Year End 31st March 2021

Receipts	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Precept	2550.00	2,550.00
Lengthsman	2124.00	1,888.00
Berrow Charities		
Total Receipts	£ 4,674.00	£ 4,438.00
Payments		
Staffing costs	1200.00	1200.00
Insurance	257.60	257.60
Audit fees	30.00	30.00
Admin	180.29	191.85
Hire of Hall	60.00	0.00
VAT recoverable	81.47	43.39
Contribution to upkeep of Churchyard	250.00	250.00
Website	53.95	44.96
Defibrillator - Rye Cross	245.65	0.00
Election	36.00	0.00
Lengthsman	2006.00	2006.00
Total Payments	£ 4,400.96	£ 4,023.80
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	273.04	414.20
General Fund B/Fwd	2261.14	2,534.18
General Fund C/Fwd	2,534.18	2,948.38
Represented by:		
Lloyds Bank	£2,534.18	£2,948.38
	£2,534.18	£2,948.38